

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ATHENS 07603 211034Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 210950Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5964

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7603

E X D I S

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EWWT, TU, GR

SUBJ: SEQUESTERED CARGO FROM LASH ESPANA

REFS: (A) ATHENS 6585; (B) STATE 206236

1. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE HAVE MADE REPEATED EFFORTS TO REMIND GOG OF NEED TO RELEASE US-OWNED CARGO SEIZED FROM LASH ESPANA JULY 19. SINCE OUR LAST REPORT WE HAVE MADE TWO FURTHER APPROACHES TO FONOFF, ONE WITH MIGLIARESSIS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR AND THE OTHER WITH ELEFThERIADES SUBSEQUENT TO RECEIPT OF REF. B. WE ARE INFORMED THAT LASH ESPANA NOW IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE OCTOBER 22, AND ASSUME THAT LASH ITALIA WILL FOLLOW SHORTLY THEREAFTER. WE HAVE REVIEWED SITUATION CAREFULLY TO ESTIMATE PROBABLE RESULTS OF YET ANOTHER APPROACH, DIRECTED TOWARD RELEASE OF SUBJECT CARGO FOR TRANSSHIPMENT ABOARD EITHER OF THESE TWO SHIPS AND CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE DESIRABLE TO PRESS GOG FOR RELEASE OF CARGO AT THIS TIME.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, NATIONAL ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 17 IN GREECE. CAMPAIGN IS GETTING UNDERWAY AND WILL GAIN MOMENTUM IN COMING WEEKS. THUS FAR EXTERNAL ISSUES, INCLUDING CYPRUS AND US-GREEK RELATIONS, HAVE NOT FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN PRESS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGN OR IN INITIAL PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS OF

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CANDIDATES. IT IS VERY MUCH IN OUR INTEREST TO SEE THIS

CONTINUE AND NOT REPEAT NOT TO PROVIDE OPENING FOR ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES WHICH WOULD DAMAGE US-GREEK RELATIONS AND THE POLITICAL POSITION OF CANDIDATES FRIENDLY TO THE US. SHOULD WE PRESS GOG NOW TO RELEASE LASH ESPANA CARGO FOR SHIPMENT TO TURKEY AND THAT ACT BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, WHICH VIRTUALLY INEVITABLE, NOT ONLY WOULD LEFT ASSAIL CARAMANLIS BUT OPPOSITION ELEMENTS OF WHATEVER POLITICAL COLORATION WOULD BENEFIT, THREATENING THEREBY TO DISRUPT AN ELECTION WHICH NOW PROMISES TO PRODUCE A STABLE MAJORITY FOR POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF CENTER. THEREFORE, WE THINK IT EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL THAT GOG WOULD AGREE TO RELEASE CARGO BEFORE ELECTIONS AND, IF IT DID, WE BELIEVE THAT PUBLICITY WOULD BE UNAVOIDABLE AND VERY DAMAGING TO US INTERESTS.

3. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE TO DEFER FURTHER APPROACHES CONCERNING SEQUESTERED CARGO UNTIL ELECTED GOVERNMENT IS ORGANIZED IN THIRD WEEK OF NOVEMBER AFTER WHICH WE WILL RESUME PRESSURE ON GOG TO RELEASE CARGO FOR SHIPMENT TO TURKEY OR, MORE REALISTICALLY, FOR SHIPMENT TO A THIRD-COUNTRY PORT. LATTER COURSE OFFERS BEST PROSPECT FOR RESOLVING ISSUE WITH MINIMAL RISK TO GOG OR DAMAGE TO US SECURITY INTERESTS IN GREECE.
KUBISCH

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION INSERTED PER INSTRUCTION
S/S-O. MR. SARROS.

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